composites/local varieties to hybrids with emphasis on two parent hybrids in early maturing materials and single cross hybrids in case of full and medium maturity materials.

Genetically, modified varieties of maize are at present being tested under controlled conditions.

**Retrenchment of employees in SAIL**

†*132. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Steel Authority of India Limited, has considered the new proposal of reducing the number of employees, to do away with the expenses;

(b) if so, whether a decision is being taken to relieve 16,000 employees by March, 2003;

(c) if so, the details in this regard; and

(d) which posts and the number of persons holding the same, who are to be relieved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Manpower in Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) is proposed to be brought down to around 1 lakh by the end of the financial year 2004-05. Accordingly, during the financial year 2002-2003, SAIL proposes to reduce its manpower by about 16,000. This is proposed to be done through introduction of Voluntary Retirement Scheme, natural and other separations and minimal recruitment.

(d) The Voluntary Retirement Scheme is beign operated in all units and departments of SAIL, excluding some critical categories, and accordingly no specific posts have been identified for VR.

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.